


2004 Inductee into
Process Automation Hall of Fame

TERRY BLEVINS Visionary



Picture a technician in the vastness of a petroleum refinery. He punches a few buttons of his hand-held Fieldbus device. He checks the response on the screen and moves on. The technician doesn't think about where the graphical images he just saw came from. He would no more think about these symbols' source than wonder how the English language was created.

Terry Blevins has given years of thought to graphical images. Blevins, principal technologist for Delta V product development at Emerson Process Management, and a small group of visionaries in process control spent years driving the development and then standardization of function block technology. In turn, this international standard enabled a step change in productivity in the process control industry.

Without the work of Blevins and a few others, standards now taken for granted in the process control industry would not have been adopted as soon as they were or, perhaps, at all. Blevins not only helped create Foundation Fieldbus, he also helped sell it to an industry reluctant to adopt an entirely new technology.

A modest man, Terry Blevins notes that his interest in control theory began in college at Purdue. He is quick to credit others, saying that his career has been "blessed by people like Bud Keyes and John Berra who said, 'Go ahead and look into this.'" And Blevins did "look into" things. In doing so, he has earned eight patents, co-authored two books and written dozens of technical presentations and journal articles.

Born in 1947 in Kentucky, Blevins is the youngest of this year's inductees into the Process Automation Hall of Fame, according to Walt Boyes, editor in chief of Process Control. Boyes also points out that "Although Terry Blevins has worked for the same company for nearly 30 years, his accomplishments read more like an end-user or a super-engineer consultant."

Living up to that "super-engineer consultant" description, since 1991 Blevins has concentrated on controls that are so advanced they can adapt or tune themselves. Obviously, these processes are enormously complex and dynamic. But Blevins believes that he has identified a technology that is robust enough to conduct a beta test in 2005.

Blevins advises his young colleagues to "Follow your passion, your strongest interest. This will give you a gratifying career and joy in life."

He also endorses the climate for innovation at Emerson. "I've seen many other environments and believe ours is a wonderful one in terms of its people and its culture."